

SECRET/EXDISSALT TWO
SESSION I
A- 124MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION
U.S. SALT DELEGATION
GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

DATE: December 19, 1972

TIME: 8:20 to 11:10 p.m.

PLACE: Restaurant du Plat d'Argent,
Geneva

SUBJECT: SALT

PARTICIPANTS: US

USSR

Dr. Raymond L. Garthoff

Mr. O. A. Grinevsky
Mr. V. S. ChulitskyWork Program

I said that Ambassador Smith had just informed me of his conversation with Minister Semenov, and I wanted to be clear about the Soviet position on the Work Program. As I understood it, the Soviet Delegation had received instructions from Moscow to the effect that the Draft Program of Work was acceptable in principle, but that the Soviet side wished to stop short of final agreement on the Program and reserve that for the beginning of the next phase of talks. In short, I assumed the Program would remain a joint draft text, but would not be initialed. Grinevsky confirmed that understanding. I asked if Moscow had any specific reservations or any desired changes. Grinevsky said that they had none at all, and their agreement in principle should be taken as a positive evaluation of the Program. However, for reasons not entirely clear to his Delegation, Moscow simply preferred to leave the document in a draft status for final consideration and agreement at the beginning of the next phase.

I said I thought that would be acceptable, although it came as a change in expectation at almost the last minute. Grinevsky remarked that it was equally unexpected to his Delegation, but he did not think it made any real difference.

MIRV Limitations

Grinevsky began our substantive discussion by raising the question of MIRV limitations. He said he thought this was an important area, and regretted that there had not been discussion of it during this exploratory phase. I noted that we had stated, in accordance with our instructions,

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that the question of qualitative limitations was held open. However, we did not have any specific considerations or suggestions to make at this time. I acknowledged that the Soviet Delegation had raised this subject, but it also had not advanced specific suggestions.

Grinevsky said he was not concerned about who had done what, but he did think it important in our respective preparations for the next phase of the talks to give serious attention to this subject.

Grinevsky then observed that in approaching the subject there were logically three possibilities: no MIRV limitations, a complete MIRV ban, or some limitations short of a ban. He said the first question, clearly, was whether one regarded MIRV limitation as being desirable. I replied that, speaking for myself, I thought MIRV limitation definitely would be desirable. However, I noted, even if both sides agreed that MIRV limitation would be desirable, it might not prove possible to agree on any specific limitation, so that we might be left with the first course which Grinevsky had alluded to: no MIRV limitations. If that were the case, I continued, SALT TWO could still proceed, taking into account unlimited MIRVs. And in fact, the approach advanced by the US Delegation in the present phase of talks had been predicated on an assumption that MIRVs were not limited. Grinevsky said that he recognized this fact.

Grinevsky agreed that it might indeed eventually prove necessary to proceed with a permanent agreement on strategic offensive arms that did not limit MIRVs. However, he agreed with me that it was desirable to have such limitations, and that posed the question of what might be feasible to agree upon.

Grinevsky half-way asserted and half-way asked about the unlikelihood of a complete MIRV ban. He said he thought that the situation had gone too far for a complete MIRV ban, given the extensive American deployment. I said I thought that was probably the case. I said that I wished, however, to have his reaction to a hypothetical situation in which the US agreed to a complete ban, de-MIRVing the Minuteman III and Poseidon forces with MIRVs already deployed. Grinevsky said he did not think that could be verified; he did not think his side would believe they could have sufficient confidence in verification. I asked if his side would in that case perhaps suggest on-site inspection. Grinevsky did not reply directly, but stated categorically that any on-site inspection, at least in the Soviet Union, was absolutely out of the question. Consideration of possible MIRV limitations involving any on-site inspection in the USSR would be a waste of time. I said I found it hard to imagine the US agreeing to on-site inspection for itself without the right to have such inspection in the

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USSR. Grinevsky agreed, and said that for this reason, along with others, he thought a complete MIRV ban was not feasible, even if the US were willing to get rid of the MIRVs already deployed.

Grinevsky said that a realistic approach to possible MIRV limitations should begin with a situation in which both the US and USSR have tested MIRVs and engage in some deployment. I asked what kind of limitation Grinevsky and his colleagues thought might be feasible to agree upon.

Grinevsky suggested the possibility of levelling off at some agreed level. I asked how that could be verified. He suggested, rather hesitantly, that one could distinguish between Minuteman III and Minuteman I (sic). I said I didn't know about that, but I don't know how one would distinguish, for example, a MIRVed SS-11 from an unMIRVed SS-11.

Grinevsky asked if I could suggest some possible intermediate limitation on MIRV deployment. I repeated that our Delegation had no instructions covering possible particular MIRV limitations. Grinevsky said that he understood that, but was simply asking if I had thought of or heard of any possibility -- not including the obviously unacceptable possibility of freezing a situation involving a large existing US MIRV deployment and no Soviet deployment. I said that one possibility I had seen suggested in our arms control literature was the possibility of a ban on deployment of MIRVs for land-based ICBMs, which of course would involve a need for the US to roll back its Minuteman III deployment. Grinevsky, joined by Chulitsky, immediately dismissed such a possibility. Grinevsky said that would leave the Poseidon with 10-14 MIRVs per missile, while getting rid of only the Minuteman III with three MIRVs per missile. And it would place the USSR at an even greater disadvantage in terms of the much longer time required before the Soviet Union could have MIRVs deployed in SLBMs (implicitly, as compared with their earlier capability to MIRV ICBMs).

Grinevsky then offered another suggestion. Perhaps MIRVs could be allowed on certain missile systems, but not others. I asked for an illustration of what he had in mind. At first he tried to use as an example the difference between the Minuteman and the Poseidon missile systems, but clarified that he was not suggesting any distinction between land- and sea-based systems. Grinevsky obviously did not want to use Soviet systems for his example, so I asked whether what he was suggesting could be illustrated by possible agreement to permit deployment of MIRVs on the SS-11 and not on the SS-9. Grinevsky nodded agreement. He asked my comments on that kind

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of possible limitation. I replied that, quite frankly, I thought there would be divided views in the US on such a proposition. Some technical experts would probably conclude that an observation of missile flight test programs and the general resources of national technical means would be adequate to verify such a limitation. Others, I thought, would probably argue that it would still be possible clandestinely to adapt MIRV systems developed and tested for one missile system to another missile system, precluding adequate verification of such limitation. I simply did not know how persuasive one line of argument might be as contrasted with the other. Grinevsky said he thought such a limitation would be verifiable.

A little later, Grinevsky interjected a remark that he had gotten a new idea about MIRV limitation during our discussion, but he did not wish to say what it was.

In concluding this part of our discussion, Grinevsky again stressed that it was important to give serious attention to the subject of MIRV limitation in preparing for the next phase of the talks.

Central System Levels

I emphasized to Grinevsky the absolute necessity of equal overall numbers of central strategic systems. I noted this was a matter the Soviet side had insisted on in the ABM Treaty, and we would insist on it for the permanent agreement for strategic offensive arms. I said that apart from the fact that it was appropriate and equitable in military terms, it was also important politically.

Grinevsky asked if I was speaking about equal numbers not including FBS. I confirmed that, repeating that I was speaking about what we call the central strategic systems. In addition, we thought these systems should be considered together in an aggregate. I asked Grinevsky if his side had in mind equal numbers of central systems, whether in an aggregate or not. Somewhat reluctantly, Grinevsky said that, "between us", his Delegation did not have in mind equal total numbers of central strategic systems. They believed that taking account of the whole strategic situation, and various strategic asymmetries, particularly including the American advantage in FBS, equal numbers of ICBMs, SLBMs and strategic bombers would not in fact correspond to equal security.

I strongly reaffirmed the great importance of equal strategic levels from the US standpoint.

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Non-Central Systems

Grinevsky said he was concerned about the fact that the US side continued to attempt to push aside the question of FBS. The Soviet side could not agree on levels for other strategic systems without knowing how FBS systems would be taken into account. Grinevsky said that he had, however, noted that our statements had referred to giving "priority" to the three so-called central systems, and to "focusing" or concentrating on these systems, thus not ruling out consideration of FBS.

I said that perhaps it would help if the Soviet side would some time explain what it meant by "taking into account" FBS. In addition, as our statements had reaffirmed, we believed that in taking account of other systems than the central strategic ones it was necessary to take account of non-central systems on both sides. I noted that of course it would not be consonant with an agreement limiting central strategic systems to build up other systems in a way that would undercut the viability of the strategic arms limitations. But the US did not regard tactical nuclear delivery systems as being strategic, and does not agree to their inclusion in levels of central strategic arms.

Grinevsky said that it was necessary some how to take account of the strategic potential of US FBS, although this did not necessarily mean including such systems in levels of ICBMs, SLBMs, and strategic bombers.

Strategic Aviation

I said I would appreciate Grinevsky clarifying what is meant by "strategic aviation". I thought perhaps in a recent statement we had referred to it in a way which suggested that the Soviet side meant to include forward based nuclear delivery aircraft in "strategic aviation". But in any case, I had the impression that when the Soviet Delegation was talking about "strategic aviation" they were not including FBS. Grinevsky confirmed that the Soviet side does not mean FBS when it uses the terms "strategic aviation" or "strategic bombers". I asked what they do mean by the term "strategic bombers", but for one or another reason Grinevsky declined to be specific.

Grinevsky asked what I thought might be "do-able" in the field of limiting strategic aviation armaments. I noted that our Delegation had spoken to that subject. Grinevsky then remarked that the US Delegation had said that the "complex of measures" proposed by the Soviet side was unacceptable. He said he could understand that; he did not believe

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there would be agreement to ban the carrying of nuclear weapons on strategic bombers. He said that the proposal to ban strategic ballistic missiles on bombers was, however, a very different sort of proposal. He asked whether I thought that was something that the American side could agree upon. I acknowledged that it was a quite different proposal, but said that our Delegation had stated all that we were in a position to say. Grinevsky said that he understood clearly that it was not the present US position to ban strategic missiles on bombers, but he wanted to emphasize that was an important measure that should be carefully considered.

I emphasized that in proposing inclusion of heavy bombers in an aggregate, the US side proceeded from the fact that at present we have a considerably larger number of such bombers, while the Soviet side has a much larger number of strategic ballistic missiles.


Partial Measures

Grinevsky turned to the question of possible additional partial interim measures which might be agreed before we are able to reach agreement on a permanent agreement limiting strategic offensive arms.

I said that the US side saw our task as one of proceeding to a permanent agreement as soon as possible. We were not proposing any partial measures along the way. That did not necessarily mean that under all circumstances the possibility of partial measures was excluded. But I was sure any such question would be looked at from the standpoint of whether it really contributed to advancing an overall agreement or whether it would be or appear to be a deviation from progress toward our goal of a permanent agreement.

I asked Grinevsky what kind of partial measures he had in mind. He suggested two: a ban on strategic nuclear systems on territorial seabeds and inland waters, and a ban on intercontinental cruise missiles. I said that I thought those were indeed two areas where our positions were in general accord, but that we have thought of these as "fringe" limitations to help round out the vastly more important limitations on ICBMs, SLBMs, and heavy bombers.

Grinevsky did not pursue the question further.


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